

VZCZCXRO8465

PP RUEHBC RUEHBZ RUEHDH RUEH DU RUEHKUK RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV
RUEHTRO

DE RUEHFR #0084/01 0261823

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 261823Z JAN 10

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8137

INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMFIS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000084

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2020

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [CD](#) [CT](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: MINURCAT: FRENCH WANT TO PRESERVE UN PRESENCE IN
CHAD AND C.A.R.

REF: A. N'DJAMENA 43

[1](#)B. N'DJAMENA 48

[1](#)C. N'DJAMENA 49

Classified By: Andrew Young, Political Counselor, 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Maintaining a UN presence in Chad and C.A.R. remains a French priority but obtaining an extension of MINURCAT will require effort to overcome Chad President Deby's opposition, MFA Chad/C.A.R. desk officer Vincent Alexandre said on January 21. Such a presence is necessary because there is no other mechanism available to carry out MINURCAT's mission of protecting refugee camps and humanitarian workers. One problem, in France's view, is that MINURCAT has been poorly supported and has not fulfilled its potential, bolstering Deby's argument against an extension. MINURCAT should be extended for another year but if not one year, than at least until the latter part of 2010. The French hope that an extended MINURCAT mission in Chad would eventually be able to hand over its functions to a more capable and motivated Chadian entity, based on the existing DIS component. MINURCAT's small element in C.A.R., however, would be difficult to replace; failure to replace would leave a vulnerable void in a volatile region. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Vincent Alexandre, MFA desk officer for Chad and C.A.R., shared his views on MINURCAT on January 22 and problems associated with the end of its mandate (reftels). Alexandre, who is a French Army Lieutenant Colonel seconded to the MFA, was blunt in his assessment. He offered his analysis of why Chad President Deby does not want MINURCAT extended. First, Deby was playing the sovereignty card, arguing that Chad did not need a foreign presence to take care of its problems. Second, Deby was exploiting the fact that MINURCAT has been a weak and ineffective force, a point with which Alexandre agreed (see further below). Third, Deby was emboldened by DRC President Kabila's willingness to oppose the MONUC operation in the DRC. Fourth, Deby claimed that MINURCAT was causing inflation because MINURCAT members had the means to pay more for items purchased locally, thus driving up prices for everyone. (Alexandre said this was a specious, disingenuous argument, since it did not take into account the money MINURCAT was injecting into the system, but that Deby and others were nonetheless making this claim.) Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, Deby was pointing to the recent significant improvements in Chad-Sudan relations in order to claim that tensions across the region were diminishing and that therefore MINURCAT was no longer necessary.

[1](#)3. (C) Alexandre said that Deby was not inaccurate in criticizing MINURCAT's performance. Alexandre said that the mission had never been adequately supported by the UN and that the UN had not been comfortable with inheriting a

mission from the EU, which had itself been cajoled into developing a mission by France, the result of France's desire to prevent Sudan's problems spilling westward and southward into Chad and C.A.R.. Near the end of its one-year mandate, MINURCAT was still only 50 percent staffed, Alexandre said, with only about 2,600 forces. That number was deceptive -- only about 600 of these forces were actually deployable, with the other 2,000 performing rear-area support functions. Many of the units were ill-equipped, lacking vehicles and even ammunition, which made it difficult to perform even the most basic tasks out in the field.

¶4. (C) That said, MINURCAT in its present state was better than nothing, and in Chad and C.A.R., anything better than nothing was worthwhile, Vincent stressed. Although operating at far less than an optimal level, MINURCAT performed a deterrent function, served as a potential trip-wire that the international community monitored, and was a confidence-builder among the NGO and humanitarian assistance communities. Vincent predicted that significant numbers of NGOs and their personnel might consider leaving Chad if MINURCAT disappeared. Vincent also said that a MINURCAT presence would surely create a more promising environment during presently scheduled elections in the region.

¶5. (C) Alexandre said that France favored a one-year extension for MINURCAT but, if this were not possible, at least an extension that would carry into the latter part of 2010 (i.e., for six-eight months). In the meantime, Vincent said that France and others should redouble efforts to train DIS personnel, who were gradually becoming more competent, who were beginning to enjoy the NGO community's trust, and

PARIS 00000084 002 OF 002

who were the natural element to carry out MINURCAT's missions should MINURCAT leave and its protective functions devolve onto the Chadian government.

¶6. (C) Alexandre suggested that we try to convince Deby that it would be in his interest to allow MINURCAT to continue. Its presence would allow Chad to avoid taking on responsibilities vis-a-vis the refugees and NGOs that the international community would strongly and rightfully expect Chad to undertake if Chad refused to allow MINURCAT to continue. Even if less than effective than it could be, MINURCAT helped ease tensions and deterred all manner of potential violence (criminal as well as political) in its zones of operations. Did Deby really want to take on those responsibilities? Alexandre suggested that Deby be reminded that if he caused MINURCAT to pack up and leave, the international community would not likely be quick to send another force if things turned sour in Chad again and Deby asked for outside assistance. The overall situation may have improved recently but Chad has seen things turn bad quickly before.

C.A.R.

¶7. (C) Alexandre said that the Togolese component of MINURCAT deployed in eastern C.A.R. was doing a good job and was quite capable compared to most of MINURCAT's other units. Alexandre said that the part of MINURCAT in C.A.R. played an important role merely by its presence in eastern C.A.R. and that region's proximity to Sudan and Chad. Alexandre said firmly that any renewal of MINURCAT had to include the portion in C.A.R., since the forces in C.A.R. were filling what could otherwise easily become a vacuum easy to exploit by the region's many hostile rebel and militia groups or by criminals seeking to raid or kidnap vulnerable parties operating in that area.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: Alexandre was quite firm in describing the importance France places on a renewal of MINURCAT and at the same time also under no illusions about MINURCAT's shortcomings. The challenge would be to make Deby agree to an extension, which Alexandre thought could be accomplished

through old-fashioned diplomatic persuasion and by painting
for Deby a bleak scenario post-MINURCAT, with Chad fully
expected by the outside world to do what MINURCAT has been
doing. END COMMENT.
RIVKIN